

# Christian Order

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# Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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## An Election is Announced

THE EDITOR

INSTANT reactions are often crude, sometimes impolite. As a rule, they are not without truth. Readers may be interested in the following, scribbled down on receipt of the news of a general election. Here it is.

This morning the headlines carried the news of a general election on March 31st. Last night we saw the gladiators on *Panorama* and again in the News on TV till I, personally, was sick of the sight of them. I believe hundreds of thousands of viewers were of the same opinion. If the politicians had been pitted against effective competition, I am sure all three Galahads would have lost out effectively. *Danger Man* would have made an awful mess of them. In the event, I imagine many went over to *The Ratcatchers*: it was the only alternative at the time. For they were, all three of the party leaders, so incredibly dull. It all sounded so utterly unreal, as each assured us what a difference his Party was going to make to the country, how it alone had the formula for recovery in its hands, how, under its guidance, Britain would emerge great and strong. Yet, the recently presented defence review of the Labour Party was designed to make us the ineffective satellite—the pensioner rather than the partner—of the United States. At the same time, the Conservatives had up their sleeves a Common Market Policy which, in all probability, would

leave Australia and New Zealand out in the cold and drive Canada into America's arms. The Liberal leader spent most of his time telling us that his party would probably secure at the coming election as large a proportion of the votes cast as last time.

This was the pap they served up to us—Harold Wilson, the father-figure; Ted Heath, the pace-maker; Jo Grimond, the wind-blown boy from the northern isles. One had a sense of tragedy as one listened. It lay in this, that none of them knew how boring they were; how, for so many who listened, their words were simply old hat. Each offered us material comfort, a step on the way to a materialist paradise. One's mind went back to the war and Churchill's blood, sweat, and tears. Now, it was pie in the sky from three men, who each appeared seized of the conviction that the British electorate really does live by bread alone. It confirmed the view, building up in my mind for months, that we have become not merely a second-class power, but a second-rate people.

So, one tends to forgive the politicians and their leaders. If we have become that, they can hardly be blamed, I suppose, if they treat us for what they think we are. Or can they? As I look back on post-war politics I see a growing tendency on the part of the politicians to play down their country's traditional values; to concentrate on giving the people what they think the people think they ought to have. It may be that we are shifting blame away from ourselves, that some of us should have demanded more than Westminster deigned to give us. However, this may be, the pitch has been lowered in these latter post-war years. We have had Supermac and his washing-machine election of 1959, Harold Wilson and his offer to turn Britain into a technological paradise; the same weary old clichés in aid of the same dull objectives. How tired I became of it all. And now they are at it again, competing for the privilege of offering to a materialist people the best of a materialist world.

The outlook of all three is unprincipled. Not one of them would dream of abolishing the Welfare State, oh dear

me no. Each is seeking to make it do more for the people; like B.O.A.C., they are determined to take care of us. Mr. Wilson's first Labour Government made a start by doling out £28,000,000 worth of extra free medicine. He and his colleagues thought nothing of knocking the Territorial Army for six in exchange. In defiance of the public interest, but paying court to a bogus equalitarianism, they will soon sign the death-warrant of the grammar schools and make all the kids go comprehensive whether they want to or not. Relentlessly, they are forcing industry and the consumer into a state-ordained strait-jacket, setting up a process, which narrows each year the field of individual responsibility and makes us all pawns of the creeping monolithic State.

And what has Conservatism to answer to all this? Nothing, at base, but an assurance that the ugly process will be brought more painlessly forward. When, in their rare moments of sanity, they are rightly critical of Labour programmes, it is usually for the wrong reasons. I see no future for the country in such a process. All the Liberals can do is come tumbling after.

I see no future for this country until the politicians offer its people more than a not too refined version of bread and circuses. What I want to hear once more are not slick answers sliding off the smooth tongues of a materialist meritocracy. What I long for, more than I can say, is the thunder, once again, of the moral imperative. I shall not get it and I shall be laughed at for wanting it. That is why I shall not vote at this election. I have had enough of playboy politics; of the pop-eyed world of the image-builders; of Uncle Hugh Carleton and all.

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Defence, like the pound, should not be involved in political feuds. The options before a responsible Minister, whatever Party he belongs to, are limited. In this article Lt.-Col. A. J. Cranstoun looks into the 1966-67 Defence White Paper and deals with the problems it raises.

## A Viable Grand Strategy

LT.-COL. A. J. CRANSTOUN

THIS year's Defence White Paper is of particular importance as it was written after the completion of the comprehensive review of the national defence policy initiated by the Government on taking office in October, 1964. This review, it will be remembered, was given two objectives: "to relax the strain imposed upon the British economy by the defence programme which it had inherited, and to shape a new defence posture for the 1970s".

Part I is mainly concerned with the forward planning of our defence policy, and Armed Services, in the light of the findings of the defence review. Part II deals with the immediate problems of maintaining and equipping our present forces so that they are able to discharge their responsibilities. As the credibility of Britain's future defence posture, and even its shape, depends upon the successful discharge of her present military commitments the two parts of the White Paper have a close bearing on each other. Any failure of the measures put forward in Part II to meet the immediate operational needs of the Services is likely to compromise the implementation of the plans outlined in Part I.

### *Changes in Emphasis Only*

While in opposition, Labour seemed to have three goals: to achieve disarmament, to strengthen the United Nations and to check the spread of nuclear weapons while maintaining a strong Western N.A.T.O. Alliance. It had con-

sistently opposed, therefore, the existence of a British "deterrent" force which, it claimed, was "a pathetic delusion" that undermined foreign policy, led to a wrong strategy and was costly. The Conservative defence policy, they said, favoured nuclear forces at the expense of conventional while attracting an unduly high proportion (7 per cent.) of the National Income. But to anyone who was expecting a major shift in defence policy as the result of this latest review, the White Paper must come as a disappointment. Except for changes in emphasis arising from the difference in the attitude towards defence, and the Armed Forces of the two Parties, Part I of the White Paper follows very closely the broad lines laid down by Mr. Sandys in 1957. Considering how fiercely the 1957 Defence White Paper, "Outline of Future Policy", was attacked by the then Opposition, the similarity of the two documents shows how very limited are the options before a responsible Minister irrespective of Party. And it is a strong argument for a national rather than a party approach to defence policy.

While re-affirming the Government's intention to work for the strengthening of the United Nations as well as for both the checking of the spread of nuclear weapons and general disarmament, it recognises that these objectives are unlikely to have been attained by the 1970s. It recognises too that until progress has been made towards disarmament the only alternative to NATO'S present nuclear based defence would be "a massive build up" of conventional forces. But the cost of such a "build up", it admits, even if acceptable to Britain's NATO Allies would be excessive and give no protection against an aggressor prepared to use nuclear arms. In this connection there are reports that the Soviet divisions facing NATO have been fully re-equipped with nuclear weapons and no longer possess the means necessary to fight a major "conventional" action of any duration. Britain will, therefore, keep her "deterrent" along with her "Strategic" (nuclear) and "Conventional" (sub-nuclear) Combat Forces. The decision that the Royal Navy should take over from the R.A.F. the Polaris-carrying

nuclear-powered submarine force becoming operational (1969-70) is the logical consequence of the 1962 decision to purchase "polaris missiles" and confirms the plan announced in the 1963 Defence White Paper.

### *Service Accommodation*

| T is interesting to note that "subject to a suitable agreement on foreign exchange" (and support costs) there is no intention at least at present of reducing the level of our ground forces serving in Germany. These troops, though forming part of the British contribution to NATO, represent the fulfilment of a pledge given to France by the then Foreign Secretary (Sir Anthony Eden) in 1954 to obtain her agreement to Germany's re-armament and admission to NATO. In return for France's agreement Britain undertook to maintain indefinitely a substantial force on the Continent. Incidentally any substantial transfer of troops from Germany to the United Kingdom would occasion considerable administrative difficulties and expense in the provision of barrack and married family accommodation. The question of "Service" accommodation, especially that for "married families" in these days of early marriage, is one of the most crucial facing the Services as it has a direct bearing on morale, recruiting and re-engagement. As the whole success of our present policy of "Regular Services" recruited by voluntary enlistment depends upon attracting sufficient volunteers, anything which might adversely effect the morale of the Serviceman, or his family, or repel potential recruits, merits immediate attention. The proportions of the Services' accommodation problem is shown in Chapter X of Part II.

### *The Aden Base*

The White Paper (Part I) confirms that Britain will continue to honour her treaty and other obligations outside Europe and a list of these commitments is given at the beginning of Chapter II. Part II. It anticipates, however, an early reduction in the number of these commitments which, it admits, are imposing an almost intolerable strain on our limited resources of manpower and material. No details are given of the reductions for security and dip-

lomatic reasons, but the Paper looks forward to substantial economies in our contingents in Cyprus and Malta, as well as to the withdrawal of the small garrisons now stationed in the South African High Commission Territories and British Guiana, soon to become independent. The most important reduction, and certainly the one with serious implications for our defence planning east of Suez, is the evacuation of the Aden Base, following the grant of Independence to South Arabia in 1968. Although its loss is likely to complicate the task of giving military aid to the rulers of the Gulf and Trucial States, as we are obliged to do under our Treaties of Protection, it may not prove as serious militarily as it is sometimes feared. Experience has shown that a base surrounded by a hostile hinterland and an unfriendly population has only a limited operational value. All these reductions, except perhaps the withdrawal of the two Battalions on "internal security" duties in British Guiana, lie in the future so they do not ease the immediate strain on our Forces.

#### *Threat of Guerrilla Warfare*

A serious note of warning is sounded in para. 5 of Chapter II Part II. This points out that the reduction in our overseas commitments will not in itself relieve the strain on our Forces, as those remaining are likely to become more onerous since the future enemy is likely to become even better supplied with modern weapons and war material. One of the lessons of the many military operations which have taken place since 1945 to Vietnam today, is the ease with which dissident and subversive elements are able to obtain weapons, equipment and expert technical instruction. The traditional advantages of the regular soldier when engaged in "savage" or irregular operations lay in his superior training, discipline and equipment; these are being steadily eroded as the training and equipment of the guerrilla improves. The Soviet "Grand Strategy", it should be remembered, gives to its forces as their second responsibility after their defence of Russia, the Motherland of World Revolution, the task of providing arms, equipment and technical train-

ing, along with instructors, for so-called "democratic" and nationalist elements engaged in the "revolutionary" struggle.

Quality still counts and will continue to do so, but quantity is also important. However well led a force or however good its morale and equipment, it will lose its fighting efficiency and become "battle weary" if it is not given regular rest periods in which to refit and retrain. Guerrilla operations are particularly wearing as there is no distinct front and no easily recognised enemy. The soldier has to live and work in an atmosphere of all prevailing uncertainty. The Government's plans for the re-organisation of our Reserve Forces, published in the White Paper (Comd. 2855) were intended to do something to ease the burden, especially upon our ground forces. A burden, which para. 19 Chapter II Part I. admits, might well become insupportable if not reduced.

The same paragraph confirms the Sandy's doctrine: "The defence of Britain is only possible as part of the collective defence of the free world". It says: "Britain will not undertake on her own any major operation of war except in co-operation with allies". As Britain has a system of defensive alliances covering the three main theatres of possible operations: NATO for Western Europe, Cento for the Middle East, and SEATO for the far East and South East Asia, the only occasions in which Britain is likely to act without allies is in the event of a "police action" in one of her own remaining dependent territories, or, which is inconceivable, if she was embarking on an aggressive war. This assurance therefore, would seem to have been included to allay fears within the Labour Party and elsewhere, which might have been roused by the Government's avowed intention to maintain a British military presence overseas, especially in South East Asia.

### *Sea Routes and Submarines*

As an island nation, still directly responsible for a number of scattered dependent territories, Britain is vitally interested in maintaining the security of her sea routes. The report of the progress being made in the task of

strengthening and modernising the Royal Navy, especially its anti-submarine forces is heartening. It was the enemy's resort to unrestricted submarine warfare which constituted the gravest threat to our survival in the two world wars. The U.S.S.R. has abandoned its former policy of close coastal defence and now possesses not only a powerful modern surface fleet of missile-firing ships, but also a submarine fleet of an estimated strength of 370 units. This includes both conventionally armed and missile-firing submarines with a world operational radius. Short of open war between the two nations, though there is little fear of an open attack by Soviet warships or submarines on British shipping, the danger of an indirect attack is ever present since, as has been already noted, it is the Soviet policy to make available war material of all types to governments whose actions are likely to forward its "grand strategic" aims.

### *Air-craft Carriers*

The decision to cancel the building of the new Air-craft Carrier (CVA OI) was the most severe "cut" announced in the White Paper. Although this will immediately affect the Royal Navy, the results will be felt well outside that Service. The argument put forward in the section of Part I, dealing with the future of the Carrier Force, is unlikely to convert many of the upholders of carrier-borne air support, especially when read against the tribute paid to carriers in para. 21 of Chapter IV Part II. This speaks not only of the part which carriers play in operations at sea, but also in limited operations where local air superiority must be gained and maintained as well as offensive support given to ground forces. Reports from Vietnam speak repeatedly of the direct support given to ground troops and the other missions flown in support of land operations by aircraft belonging to the United States carriers. Almost as soon as the intention to cancel the CVA, OI was announced, the United States made known their decision to build two more carriers. The decision to cancel the carrier is bound to arouse controversy, and the critics will find considerable justification for their opinion, and be confirmed in their opposition, by the resignation of the

First Sea Lord and his political chief, the Minister for the Royal Navy.

The carrier may be becoming increasingly vulnerable in modern warfare. But what weapon is not, except perhaps the intercontinental ballistic missile resting snugly in its deep reinforced concrete silo? If the carriers are "sitting ducks" what are the bases? According to a Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Air Force "the giant air bases of today will become the bomber cemeteries of a future war". If a nuclear weapon is used in war, the world will never be the same again; this is fortunately generally recognised. Sub-nuclear "low-level" war, fought on the Seven Principles laid down by Mao-Tse-Tung, has brought considerable gains to those who practise it. It is a war of attrition, and the escalation is in men and treasure, imposing an effort on the defenders, the nations of the Free World, quite out of proportion to that required of the aggressors. This being so there would seem to be no valid argument, ideological or military, for changing a strategy which, at little expense, achieved considerable success not only militarily but also diplomatically.

### *Province of the Unexpected*

Although there are good reasons for assuming that no responsible government would lightly resort to nuclear war in the present international situation, we have entered the nuclear age, and war, even if "cold", is the province of the unexpected. If surprise is to be avoided, it is essential to take all practical steps to guard against possible eventualities. In the 1970s it is safe also to assume that considerable progress will have been made in the advancement and spread of nuclear technology. Many more nations will have acquired the ability to make their own weapons, and the weapons themselves will be cheaper to manufacture and easier to obtain. The decision, therefore, to withdraw our V Bomber Force from NATO control, when our polaris-carrying submarine force has become fully operational and able to replace it, is welcome. If Britain is to play an effective "peace-keeping" role, in the Middle and especially the Far East in the 70s, as seems to be the intention, she

must possess, and be seen to possess the means to respond promptly and effectively to minor nuclear threats or blackmail.

The question of the aircraft to replace the aging Canberras, and the Government's intentions towards the Aircraft Industry, was the subject of much discussion both in and outside Parliament before the issue of the White Paper. The decisions contained in the White Paper will come, therefore, as a surprise to few. They are a compromise and are unlikely to arouse much enthusiasm. There may well be a certain amount of scepticism about the success of the Government's plans: "We have taken steps to ensure that the full foreign exchange cost of the FIII A will be fully offset by sales of British equipment". Success will depend upon British Industry being able to meet the customers requirements. There is no guarantee of American purchase, only the promise that British firms will be allowed to tender for United States defence contracts as those of the United States.

### *A Viable Strategy*

The decisions that Britain should continue to retain her deterrent, and to maintain a military presence in the Middle and the Far East, will arouse indignation in some quarters and the cancellation of the carrier (CVA 01) in others. Few, however, are likely to disagree with the defence Minister's two contentions: "Military strength is of little value if achieved at the expense of economic health," and "Defence must be the servant and not the master of foreign policy".

In the formulation of the national policies the Armed Services play no active part. Their task, as experts in their particular fields is to advise the responsible ministers of the military implications of proposed policies, and to translate these implications into concrete terms of men, arms and equipment. Once the national policies have been formulated, the Armed Services become one of the principle means for their implementation. This may be done through their "active" intervention, which means war, or through their visible presence in the background, in other words, by practising a strategy of "deterrence".

But if the Services are to play their parts effectively in defence of the national interests, they must form part of a well co-ordinated "grand strategy" which is that branch of statecraft concerned with the planning of how the national resources political, economic and military may be best used to beat a threat of war occasioned by its policies. A viable grand strategy, requires the maintenance of a correct correlation of the defence forces to the nation's political needs and economic resources.

### *Economies dictated by Policy*

Between the wars, the British Armed Forces did not receive a sufficiently large share of the Gross National Product to enable them to discharge the responsibilities laid upon them by the national policies, as Mr. Mayhew reminded the House in his statement explaining his resignation on 22nd February. (It was a paper by the Chiefs of Staffs showing the operational deficiencies of the three Services which tied the hands of Mr. Chamberlain forcing him to temporize and to accept the 1938 Munich Agreement.) If under the recent Conservative Administration the Defence Services were receiving an over generous helping of the Gross National Product (7 per cent), the proposal to place a pre-determined fixed ceiling on their budget (6 per cent of the G.N.P.) may well have the opposite effect. The Services already under considerable strain, as the White Paper clearly shows, in trying to meet their responsibilities owing to shortage of trained manpower, would then have the added complication of deficiencies in arms and equipment. And this at a time when modern weapons of advanced design were becoming increasingly available to their opponents. Economy by all means, through strict control, the elimination of waste, the adoption of advanced techniques of accountancy and costing and the rationalisation and re-organisation within the Ministry of Defence and the Services—but not by placing an arbitrary limit on their spending; this must be related to their operational responsibilities dictated by the national policies. Defence Forces, which took 6 per cent or less of the Gross National Product, might appear in peace-time a good bargain—but, if they

should fail in war through an insufficiency of men, arms and equipment, they would prove to have been, in reality, a very expensive one.

### *Manpower the Key*

Perhaps the most important section is the one dealing with manpower, and it will be studied abroad by both friends and possible foes. For in the final analysis, the success of every defence policy depends upon manpower and the ability to get the right number of men with the right equipment to the right place at the right time.

So far Britain has succeeded in meeting all her commitments; but it is disquieting to read that this has only been done, on occasions, by robbing one commitment to honour another, all units in "strategic" reserve being fully committed elsewhere. It may seem of little consequence from where troops are "found" to meet a particular emergency and, provided Britain's allies are prepared to be reasonable and to allow her to withdraw her troops at need, there is no cause for concern. But this is not so. The whole credibility of Britain's strategy is based on "deterrence" and its success, particularly in the "peace-keeping" role East of Suez, depends upon convincing would-be aggressors that she has both the ability and will to reply appropriately to all threats. To do this, she must be seen to possess adequate reserves of men and war material; besides it may not always be possible to "disengage" committed troops in time to meet a new contingency. (In peace-keeping operations speed of re-action is of paramount importance if a potentially dangerous threat is to be reduced to insignificance.) The mutinies which took place in the former British East African territories in early 1964 were quickly crushed and stopped from developing into large scale rebellions or even civil wars through Britain having immediately available the necessary forces to answer effectively the appeal for help of the governments concerned. The same is true in the case of the attempted *coup d' etat* in the former French territory of Gabon, about the same time, which was quickly and effectively smothered by the prompt

intervention of units of the French "strategic" reserve on behalf of the lawful government.

### *Adequate Reserve Forces*

The need for an adequate, centrally held reserve of units is important, not only for strategic or operational reasons, but also for morale and administration. Units need regular periods of rest. Since the war, the bulk of our regular forces have been overseas, and for the most part engaged in an almost continuous series of active operations. "Home" posting and tours of duty have been few and short for both individuals and units. This state of affairs places great strain upon individuals and disrupts family life. The result is numbers of "trained" men are not re-engaging, while many young men are put off from joining the Colours. The White Paper states that recruiting and re-engagements are both failing to reach their targets. The proposed re-organisation of our Reserve Forces may do something to relieve the present strain. But it would seem that without drastic measures to relieve our "over-strained" and over-stretched forces, we shall soon reach the point where we shall be unable to meet our commitments, and Britain's whole defence posture will lose credibility in the eyes of the world. The Paper talks of reductions in the number of our commitments, but it utters a timely warning that these reductions, however welcome in themselves, may not give all the relief expected as the remaining commitments are likely to become heavier owing to the possible enemies becoming progressively better armed, equipped and trained.

In the last paragraph of Part I, the Minister looks forward hopefully: "As the pattern of our commitments is adjusted, we shall be able to relax the strain on our forces without sacrificing the speed of our re-action in a crisis. If the price of defence today is high, at least we shall be getting value for money". The Minister may be thinking of the situation in the 70s when the new defence posture should be taking shape, but the reader will be left wondering how our forces are to support the strain in the immediate future, and whether it may not be necessary to re-introduce some form of National Service?

## *Too Much on Too Little*

Mr. Mayhew's statement on February 23 was certainly not calculated to allay misgivings roused by the White Paper. The cancellation of CVA OI was only the most spectacular reason, "the tip of the iceberg" of disagreements leading to his and the First Sea Lord's resignations. Mr. Mayhew describes the figure of £2,000 m. as purely artificial, simply the projection of the cost of defence in 1964-65 into 1969-70, laid down by the Treasury before the Defence Review was written. It would seem that the departments concerned with the preparation of the Review, knowing the Treasury's wishes, set out to meet them forgetting Mr. George Brown's warning during the 1962 Defence debate: ". . . if one is directing ones policy according to ones purse, it is almost certain that policy will be wrong".

The result of the White Paper would be to place a strain on our forces, or an unacceptable dependence on the United States. The White Paper, in short, asks us to do too much on too little. But what must shock everyone with relations serving overseas, or any connection or interest in the Services, is the disclosure that not all the "cuts" were specified in the White Paper. These "cuts" represent a very severe blow to the military capability of our Forces as they fall overwhelmingly on weapons and equipment. Not only the Navy lose the CVA. OI., but all three Services are effected by the "cuts".

It is unfortunate that the Defence White Paper should have been presented at a moment when the country is entering a pre-election period. It would have been too much to expect that the problem of Defence and the White Paper would not be drawn into the arena of Party politics reducing considerably the chance of calm and objective discussion of a subject with a very direct bearing on the security of everyone living in this country.

## *War a Political Act*

This year's Defence White Paper containing as it does the summary of the long awaited Defence Review, is bound to be of more than usual interest to foreign Service Attachés and their "Authorities". And the resignations

of both the political and professional heads of the British Navy, together with the former's statement will give to it a very special importance. The White Paper will be studied with particular reference to the resignations and the ex-Minister's statement and these will play an important part in their reports. The reports will aim at giving to their Authorities an appraisal of Britain's present military capabilities. They may well include what those capabilities are likely to be in the 70s, when Britain's defence posture is expected to take shape. The reports are also likely to reflect the personal impressions gained by the Attachés from the arguments put forward in the defence debates, and by the Parties during the election campaign.

The Defence White Paper has a much wider importance than the purely military. War is a political act: ". . . the continuation of policy by other means". Defence is therefore the "servant of foreign policy" and it is also the test by which Foreign Powers, especially potential enemies, judge both the "Will", and the capability of a Nation to its policies. On this judgment may depend the issue of Peace or War.

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## *Women's Work*

Pope Pius XII undertook the defence of women workers and their wages when he said: ". . . the Church has always sustained the principle that, for the same work, the same salary should be paid—and women should be paid the same as men for the same work . . . It is both unjust and contrary to the common good that a woman's work should be used only because it is cheaper, with bad results, not only for the women, but also for the male worker who is thus exposed to unemployment."—Allocution to Italian Congress of Women Workers, 15th August, 1945.

## CURRENT COMMENT

The net effect of the Ghanaian coup will probably be to reduce the influence of Pan-African thinking on the policies of independent African States. Paradoxically enough, this may mean in the end the more rapid attainment of the ultimate goal of the Pan-African dream. How this can be is explained by Father Crane in the following article.

# Ghana: Thoughts On a Coup

THE EDITOR

THE most sensible comment on the Ghanaian coup appeared in the Economist for February 26th, two days after it took place. "African leaders," it said, "are now learning that the influence they exercise in the world is proportionate to the respect inspired by their achievements at home." It could have been better phrased; African leaders are realising that, to stay in power, they must make their first consideration the service of their people at home. This is what Nkrumah never did. This is what his overthrow was all about.

### Power and the People

Nkrumah's first consideration was the fulfilment of his own grandiose dreams of power. If the people benefited it was as a by-product of his megalomania. This the Ghanaians resented bitterly. Their feelings were perfectly expressed by the Colonel who led the coup when he accused Dr. Nkrumah of treating Ghana as his personal property. This is precisely what he did and the Ghanaians were very quick to realise it. They saw themselves as sub-humans in their President's eyes, no more than the furniture that

went with the private estate into which, with such arrogance, he had turned their country. It was for this that they rose against him. They would have done so before had it not been for the excellence of his security. That they should have done so at all bears witness to the depth of their own sense of dignity.

### **Independence and Freedom**

The people of Ghana sought independence originally in order that they might have the chance of managing their own affairs, as, indeed, they were well able to do; taking responsibility for their own lives, as their dignity demanded. This, in fact, is the last thing they were allowed to do. Independence was still-born in this sense, that those who had struggled for it were denied its essential fruit. In August, 1957, only five months after independence, northern leaders were deported from their own country as aliens. After that, the progress to absolutism was cumulative, as it had to be. Ghanaians saw very soon that the hoisting of the new national flag meant the replacement of a mild-mannered type of rather wooden, colonial authoritarianism by a new Black Caesarism. (If Nkrumah resembled anyone at all it was the late Benito Mussolini.) They were amongst the first to be given the hard lesson that independence is not co-terminous with personal freedom; that government by mass majority is not necessarily representative; that power resting only on a basis of popular consent breeds totalitarian forms. After all, there is a sense in which Hitler and Mussolini were great popular democrats. After the initial halcyon days, as he fiddled "free" elections to secure "unanimous" support, Kkrumah himself could make the same claim.

### **Liberals and Liberty**

So did a good many of his friends on both sides of the Atlantic. It is important to realise that, in the context of developing Africa, loose-talking and emotional western progressives are prone to encourage the very reverse of the thing they profess to desire. One of the more nauseating phenomena of our times is the liberal defence of illiberal

political arrangements in developing countries — on the grounds, mainly, that they were born of popular consent and/or that those in charge have the long-term interests of their people at heart. The man on the horse is all right provided the people put him in the saddle and he professes loudly enough to be their saviour. There is a third, essential condition. The western liberal friends of a developing country's strong man should be on the Left. He himself should have made the necessary noises in its direction during the usual preparatory years of self-imposed exile in London. That done, he can treat his own people as he likes when his time comes for power. His western, left-wing friends will never desert him; for what they want, really, is not the good of people, but power—for the practice of their theories—wherever it can be found. As I write these lines, I am thinking of some Liberal European members of Nkrumah's entourage, eagerly professing to be doing their liberal best for a country, which they were busy binding in chains; rubbing shoulders, as they did so, with the dregs of Communism's cosmopolitan riff-raff, to say nothing of a Nazi doctor wanted now on criminal charges in his own country and poor Hanna Reitsch, Hitler's one-time woman pilot, busy, they tell me, running a glider club for her new master. Lord, what a gang! And I have not included the group of black sycophants, representatives of a new bourgeoisie that battened leech-like on Ghana's poor people; nor the strong-arm boys of the Builders Brigade, who brought intimidation to the enforcement of the Osagyefo's rule.

### **The Logic of Secularism**

Secular liberalism—of the type professed, say, by Geoffrey Bing—is no match for this kind of competition. The hatchet-boys will always be one up on it and, believe me, there were plenty of hatchet-boys in Nkrumah's Ghana. For a time, the secular liberals fool themselves, perhaps, that all will come right in the end; tolerating unpleasantness; co-operating with it, as Geoffrey Bing did, in the hope that all would yet be well; that the new dawn will come. In fact, it never does. All the Bings of this world get in the

end is a tyrant's fist smashed in their face or else the ignominy of deportation along with the rest of the baggage of a deposed dictator. Either way they lose. They always will. For what they can never see are the totalitarian consequences of their own secularist logic. I doubt whether they ever will see them. No matter how often their silly hopes come crashing to the ground they themselves will rise to go on their way sowing dragons' teeth, prattling on about the popular will and the glories of majority rule—until, once again, they become victims of its totalitarian implications. When will they ever learn that the task of good men everywhere today is to make a world safe not for democracy, but dignity; that, where cleavage is too great and moral principle in abeyance, simple majority rule can only breed mob rule, which means no more than a mobster in charge of the mob. The essence of democracy is representation on a basis of principle. As brought by European secularists to Africa it has turned out to be no more than Rousseau in the bush. Why be surprised if that continent also sprouts its Napoleons ?

### **Independence and Domestic Need**

The really remarkable thing is that the African people have spotted all this so quickly and moved against it with such speed. Ghana was not an isolated example. By this, I do not mean to draw attention to the Nigerian coup which preceded it. Both coups served to high-light a general trend, which a good many observers have missed, but which has been fairly obvious for some time. I refer to the dissatisfaction felt increasingly throughout independent English-speaking Africa with the regimes of those who brought them independence. In every case that I know of the complaint of the people is with restrictions placed on their personal freedom and a noticeable lowering of their standard of living. They are tiring rapidly of rulers who brought them independence. In every case, their reason for doing so is the diversion by government of already scanty resources away from the service of the people and into the aridities of image-building in order that prestige may be maintained in a Pan-African world. It does not

take much to make this kind of diversion manifest where, as in Malawi, the annual national income per head is £12 10s. or Tanzania where it is £19 10s. Ghana, it is true, had wider margins to play with. The realisation, perhaps, was a little slow in coming. Moreover, the dictator overawed, and his system of repression was effectively built and maintained. In the end, however, it was clear Nkrumah was wrecking the country and that a point had come where the poor were almost without bread. Between March, 1963, and December, 1964, prices of home grown food in some parts of Ghana rose 400 per cent.: the average throughout the country was 36 per cent.

### **Good Time at the Top**

At the same time, the Osagyefo and his Ministers continued to do very well for themselves. He had, amongst other things, his own private VC 10 and a yacht that cost £250,000. He owned four residences in Ghana, three of elaborate construction and furnishment and including a great new brooding monster of a place on the escarpment overlooking Accra, with its own private parade ground. The area he built onto Flagstaff House covered seven acres: the last I heard of building operations there was the construction of two pill-boxes, one on either side of its main entrance. Meanwhile, the official elite lived well. I remember, way back in 1960, receiving an invitation to a ministerial home when I was in Accra. It stood in the city's swish new residential district. My host was out when I arrived and showed no signs of reappearing. I contrived a look at the exterior of his lovely new house—it had everything—before being shoved away by an overalled bodyguard. I estimated its cost at £70,000. Later, after enquiry, I found that the estimate was correct. Yet, the Minister in question had been in office only for three years at a salary of £3,000 a year. There must have been hundreds of cases like that. The picture in Ghana, even then, was of a dictator and his bourgeois minions grinding the faces of the poor. The pay-off nearly came with the general strike, which racked the Cape Coast area after the brutal budget of October, 1961. Police and troops were used against the strikers. It

may well be that, this time, the last straw came when, in the face of his people's hunger, Nkrumah built an elaborate conference unit and 2,000-seat banqueting hall to suit the needs of representatives attending last October's conference of the Organisation of African Unity. The cost was around £10,000,000. Is it false to see a parallel, however dim, with Versailles and Louis XIV? Had it not been for the pre-emptive action of the army, there might well have been a *Jacquerie*.

### **A Time to Speak**

What the Ghanaian coup has dramatised, I think, is the growing insistence of the African people that their voice should be heard; that rulers should take their people's needs into account as a first priority; that nothing they do by way of Pan-African achievement can compensate for neglect at home. To put it in other terms, the second (social) revolution has come to Africa far faster than many of us thought. I used to give it ten years. It has taken three. The people of independent English-speaking Africa are no longer content with the fact of independence. They want its fruits in terms of a better life. So far as I can see, this means two things—responsibility for their own lives and a raised standard of living; bread, in other words, and freedom; respect for dignity by governments who realise that, in the field of social advancement, it is their business to help the people to help themselves. These, at base, were the issues that dominated the elections in Tanzania last year. It is to President Nyerere's credit that he should have created a piece of electoral machinery that allowed his people, within the framework of a one-party State, to voice their domestic grievances. The results were significant and wholly beneficial. In an election confined to domestic and, even, very local issues, many sitting members were swept from the National Assembly. Had Nkrumah created such machinery, the coup that drove him from power might never have taken place. The Prime Minister of Sierra Leone should know now that his proposed one-party State, presumably à la Nkrumah, will form no solvent for his country's difficulties, which are largely of his own

making. Contentment will return to Sierra Leone if the present Government makes its first objective the service, without fear or favour, of the country's population as a whole. One could say much the same thing of other independent African countries.

### **Pan-Africanism Recedes**

If this analysis is correct, it will mean that Pan-Africanism will recede for the time being into the background, that the tendency will be for it no longer to dominate the English-speaking African scene. The pressure by populations on independent African governments for the elementary constituents of the good life—bread and freedom—will command attention at the expense of image-building abroad. What the coup in Ghana highlights is the need rulers of Africa's independent governments are under to take account of demands endemic in the dignity of their people. Failure to do so will bring the soldiers in. Under the circumstances, Pan-African issues will tend to lose their importance. This process may be delayed now that Nkrumah has found in Guinea not merely asylum, but a perch for fresh propaganda. It cannot be checked, however, for any length of time. What Ghana's coup means is that African governments that want to survive must consider the needs of their people. No amount of bluster abroad can free them from this obligation. The effect on Pan-African policies, as hitherto understood, is bound to be profound.

### **Pan-African Dream to the Fore**

And yet, by what seems at first sight to be a contradiction, the dream of an Africa—*independent, free and at racial peace*—may well be brought closer to fulfilment if rulers are forced to put present Pan-African policies in cold storage. I have long believed that the way to bring Southern Africa to respect for dignity and racial justice is through the example set before its peoples by already independent African countries. Well before UDI, it was becoming increasingly difficult in Rhodesia to uphold the claims of African nationalism. The reason, if I may say so, was the seemingly bad example of independent African

States. White supporters of legitimate African ambitions—and there were more of them than most people think—were constantly being scuppered by opponents, who presented them with Nkrumah's tyranny in Ghana or the bloody revolt in Zanzibar as typical of what would happen in black-governed Rhodesia. This may have been very unfair, especially when one thinks of the discrimination against Africans in that country, but there was more than a grain of truth in the argument and this made it stand up in discussion and seem powerfully effective. It got increasingly difficult to present the African case in the light of these and other examples. Add to this the warring of African factions amongst themselves — the violence and intimidation practised in the Salisbury townships in the spring and summer of 1964—and my African friends will understand me when I say that, at times, it was almost impossible to keep up one's heart. How I used to hope that from somewhere in independent Africa outside Rhodesia there would come an example — of a people earning its bread in peace and personal freedom—sufficient to touch the most obdurate white heart. Tragically, it never came to a degree sufficient to give real confidence to those who wanted to build a truly multiracial society. They had so little to look to around them: meanwhile, the South African "experiment" appeared to be succeeding and the eyes of many of the best in Rhodesia began to turn southward. It was tragic to watch the dream fade away under the pressure of sad events.

### **Hope for the Future**

My thought now is that, given the forced preoccupation of African rulers with domestic needs—the pressure they are now under, if they wish to survive, of coping with the revolution of rising expectations amongst the poorer sections of their people; given this as a fact, Africa's independent countries will be compelled, whether their rulers like it or not, to begin to settle down to meet the wants of their people in peace, without corruption and in accordance with the claims of their dignity. Were they to prove successful in doing this, I am quite convinced they would do more

to crack the racialist edifice of Southern Africa than the Pan-Africans ever dreamed of. There is no power like that of good example. What the whites of Southern Africa need to feel in their bones is the example of one independent African country after another, with its energies concentrated on building a society in the best interests of the poorest of its people. This example has not yet been given by any country of independent Africa. It may seem unreasonable of me to expect it or of whites in Southern Africa to demand it. The question, I would reply, is not one of reasonableness, but of fact. I am not making a value-judgment, merely stating that what would seem the best way of cracking white supremacy in Southern Africa is not, in fact, being taken.

The significance for me of the Ghanaian coup is that it marks the dramatic beginning of a period during which Africa's independent rulers will be pressurised by their own people into giving the world the example it has been looking for. Paradoxical though it may seem, the coup in Ghana may have meant that the day of deliverance for the poor people of Southern Africa is nearer at hand than it was before.

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## Integral Part

"The Church is the standard-bearer of a way of life which is ever up-to-date . . . We reaffirm strongly that this social doctrine is an integral part of the Christian conception of life."—John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*.

Do women need defence? By concentrating on the domineering woman, the writer shows that even for them something can be said. And it is to the credit of most mothers that they don't produce such daughters.

## In Defence of Women

E. L. WAY

THINKING of Ena Sharples, Bessie Braddock, and the alarming leading character in *Sailor Beware!* one is only too willing to throw down the pen that has dared to write *In Defence of Women* and run for shelter. Not that for one moment one thinks of Mrs. Braddock as a bullying, hateful busybody but rather that if anyone needed defending it would not be Mrs. Braddock. She is so obviously capable of taking care of herself. And there are so many more like her. Ceylon and India have both elected women as Prime Ministers. And we have all had to reflect on the paradox that where women were least emancipated they have gone farthest in the political field. But then it ought to be the fate of facile generalisations that they should be constantly modified. The sad fact is that they so seldom are. Have we not, for example, believed that the Germans are an easily governed people? A people, as it were, ready-made for subjection. And yet were they not amongst the first to go rioting into the streets and there tackle the Russian tanks with their bare hands? And have they not dared the mine-fields and the bullets of the frontier guards and fled to the West in their thousands? Yet if one were to ask a random sample of people whether the Germans were an easily led, sheepish nation can we doubt what the answer would be? The sample would be remembering Hitler, certainly not an easy man to forget, yet Hitler is not the German people. He is only one more proof of the truth of Lord Snell's saying: "When a nation boils the scum rises to the top".

## *The Dominant Sex?*

How many men are seen trotting meekly at the heels of formidable women? The larger and more formidable the women grow the smaller and more insignificant do their male shadows become. One wryly reflects that priests, observing such couples, must surely offer up a silent thanksgiving: "There but the grace of God, perhaps, go I". Indeed all men who have not been overshadowed by their womenfolk must offer up the same prayer. Such women would defend themselves. They would say that all the serious decisions, the financial worries, the children's problems, in-law troubles, the lifelong struggle to rise in the world, and in the esteem of one's neighbours, were all left entirely to them. And that many families without such stalwart women to sustain and support them would collapse. Is it then a question of weak men gravitating by some psychic law towards the women of strong character? Not always.

## *A Spoilt Woman*

Take the case of the competent man respected at his work, doing it so well that he is constantly rising and has excellent prospects, yet behind this outward success there lies a very different set of circumstances. He went into his first home with his newly married life and everyone was certain that happiness lay ahead. The home had been provided by his father, and it contained every convenience that a young wife could wish for. Yet in a short while they sold the house and moved to London so that he could better his prospects. In London he did improve his prospects but they were soon on the move from one suburb to the next. Later the wife wanted to go back to Yorkshire. Her friends were there. Her relatives were always dropping in. London was so friendless. The husband began to have a resigned yet worried look stamped between the eyes. He did everything he could. He often took supper up to her in bed. He gave her anything she asked for that he could afford. Yet she looked and was a thoroughly spoilt and discontented woman. Maybe he should have taken a firm line with her from the start. Perhaps there were

other circumstances about which it would not be proper to speculate. And in any case speculation, however shrewd and plausible, is still speculation and not fact.

### *The Shadow*

And then there is the bully. The woman who wants to run everyone's life for them. The husband, another extremely capable workman, and liked by everybody, is never allowed out of her sight. She leads him like a guide-dog does the blind. She is a born schemer planning everything in advance. Even her mother-in-law's death is approximately dated. Yet the old lady is stubborn and refuses to die according to plan. The wife is put out by this defiance, but doesn't learn by it, instead she goes on with fresh schemes. From the very beginning she was determined to become the sun about which everything in the family planetary system revolves. And, apart from occasional comets and straying meteors, she has become the centre of gravity of that family. She gets an immense satisfaction from dominating everybody and everything within her gravitational field. Changing the metaphor, one sees her like some sleek spider sitting in the middle of her most elaborate web, with the sun shining on it, disturbed only when she makes a frantic dash to the perimeter to inspect angrily any marauding insect which flies safely by.

### *Meditation*

For the observant spectator such characters are an endless source of instruction and meditation. Not that, like Cassius, one ever hopes to "look quite through the deeds" of these women. Only a novelist of great talent, a Mauriac, or a Lawrence, could allow us to penetrate such depths. How do they begin? There must be a fount of energy at the source without which nothing much for good or evil is achieved. The energy may be of physical origin. And perhaps it is inherited. Like most origins, it is something of a mystery. And generally acknowledged as such. "Where on earth does he get the energy to get through so much?" we ask. And there is no answer. (It does sometimes

spring from deep conviction.) Given the energy, the will begins to appear very soon after birth. By the age of three the little girl knows if she can get her own way by creating a scene. She will throw herself on the floor and kick and scream, drumming a fine tattoo on the carpet with her heels. (One should, perhaps, observe this display of naked will in a midget with awe.) Allowed to develop, by succeeding with such tactics, the child will grow into the big fat woman, or the small pint-sized one, who will hold her husband in slavery. This is also generally recognised for is it not said of such girls "She is a proper little madam". In short she will become spoilt, greedy, selfish, and grimly possessive.

### *Strength of Character*

It calls for strength of character, subtlety, and stamina to wage a successful battle over the years with an energetic and strong-willed child. (It can be exhausting too. Most exhausting.) Subtlety of intelligence to know the difference between breaking the will and educating it is important. (Breaking a will can break a person, and this could be evil.) And humour helps so often when every other weapon in the parental armoury has proved useless. A loud family laugh at an awkward moment can force a smile on to the face of a sulky or very angry child. Smacking is useful sometimes. When it fails, as it often does, it should be abandoned as the cure for a particular form of bad behaviour. Nothing fails like repeated failure. To see a mother trying over the years with loving kindness to help first one child and then another to read, or to overcome some fault of character is surely one of the unexpected and lasting joys of marriage. Poor father, in some areas his patience is insignificant and his irritability, screened from the world, has to be seen to be believed. "Use every man after his desert and who would 'scape whipping?" asked Hamlet. And every husband and father, reviewing the years, would ruefully agree.

### *A Public Joke*

The thumbnail sketches given here of spoilt, possessive,

and domineering women have, we hope, brought the species to life in the mind of the reader for a few minutes. Doubtless he could improve on the sketches and give further examples. The fact remains that such people are the public jokes of their neighbourhoods. To their families they are not jokes, except when their backs are turned. It is surely one of the best defences of women that as mothers they have trained their daughters so well that there are not many domineering women flourishing like oases in deserts of misery. Why these women should be cruel to their husbands and ridiculously indulgent to their children is another facet of a curious problem. Have their husbands failed them in some particular which makes them feel that they have been cheated by life? (D. H. Lawrence often said, or did he quote, 'If a woman cannot have love, she will have consideration'.) And so they are driven from one desire to another seeking satisfaction and finding none. It could be a new carpet, or a new car, or a larger house, or fresh interior decorations—contentment forever eludes them.

### *Clinics*

If they were aware of their condition perhaps a marriage guidance clinic could help them. But their very energy and bustle deludes them into thinking that they are in no need of help. The mere suggestion would make them angry. In the meantime they have an unhappy knack of falling foul of other women who don't share their unrest and dissatisfaction. And their judgments are as cruel as their eyes are sharp. They seldom miss a trick, though they never win the game. One could pity them if one's sympathies were not taken up by their victims. For these appear from moment to moment to be about to be swept out with the household refuse.

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## MONTHLY REPORT

Here is the inspiring experience of a priest who set out to help the villagers of a newly formed parish. The area had been devastated by Mau Mau. The people were very poor . . . Fr. Gitonga is now a student at Claver House.

# Credit Union in Kenya

JOACHIM GITONGA

### The Idea

THE Editor of *Christian Order*, Father Paul Crane, S.J., asked me to write an article in his publication on how I started the above Credit Society in a small Parish in Nyeri Diocese, Kenya. It was in fact Father Crane who gave me the idea as to where, how and why to organise a Credit Union in a given community. This was eight years ago. He was invited by the East African Bishops to lecture on "The Church and Social Development" in various Catholic Institutions. One of the places he happened to lecture in was our St. Paul's Seminary where I was doing my last two years of Theology. During the course of his lecture, Father Crane demonstrated clearly and emphatically the role of a Catholic Priest in a socially developing community. He gave examples of many priests who had helped people in many countries to develop and raise their social standard. He said many developing countries would have been much better off if priests, while discharging their spiritual duties could at the same time show the people how to fight poverty and ignorance. People would accept and follow Christianity more eagerly. He quoted as examples the Credit Unions and Co-operative Societies in Canada where priests and laymen had worked together to relieve men from poverty. The speech of Father Crane arrested my mind so vehemently that since that time I began thinking how I could fight practically both spiritual

and material poverty which was so universal in my country. I began reading books about Credit Unions.

### **The Situation**

After my ordination in 1960 I was posted to a new parish which was only a month old. There I found myself in a situation where there was a need for credit unions if the social standards of the people were to be raised. The area had been devastated by Mau Mau warfare. The people had had their own schools, known as Kikuyu Independent Schools and trading centres. Most of them had been built of stone. When I arrived there I found only ruins. All this had been destroyed by the then government forces during the Mau Mau warfare. Property had been either destroyed or confiscated. People were now packed in various villages scattered all over my parish just as it was in all the other neighbouring parishes. In these villages there were many poor people, the old, orphans and many widows with large families whose husbands had been killed during the fighting of the Mau Mau. The only consolation these people had were Missionaries and the Red Cross who were going around distributing food and clothing to them. To send their children to school was very difficult for my parishioners. I had seven schools entrusted to my care. Many parents could not afford school fees which were £3 a year. Besides school fees parents had to build and maintain schools and because of all this many schools had very few children. A class supposed to have 40 children would only have ten or even less than ten children. The only Government aid to the schools was to pay teachers and provide classroom equipment. The rest was left to the parents: to build schools, make the furniture, and to build houses for the teachers.

### **Income**

The only source of income for these people was the little maize crops produced from the poor soil, the wattle tree which gave them wattle bark, firewood and charcoal. They could sell these three products and get some money but very little compared with all their needs. Yet out of

this small income, some people could save a little money which they deposited in local banks. The Parish had about 60 teachers who were getting their regular salary every month. They too were keeping their money in the local banks. There were small local traders whose savings also went to the banks. One of the neighbouring locations had planted coffee, which was yielding a good income to the coffee owners. Still they too had their money put in the local banks.

### Credit

These people needed Credit to develop their fields, plant tea, coffee, keep grade cattle, send their children to school or the sick members of the family to the hospital. But where and how to get it? Banks came for their little money and went away. Very few could go and get loans from the same banks. As is natural to the commercial banks, any loan borrowed was required to have very strong securities, so only the few who could afford it were able to get the loans. Yet every week the bank was coming to collect the little they had saved. I do not blame the banks as they could not do otherwise. But somebody else had to do otherwise.

### How?

One day I went to the reserve bank to see for myself how people put their money there. Some were depositing and others withdrawing as it is usual with banks. Small traders, charcoal burners, small farmers, were all depositing 5/-, 10/-, or 15/-, etc. There were many more depositors than withdrawers and these were also withdrawing small amounts. As these were visiting the banks, the money they deposited went thirty miles away to the District Banks.

When I went home that evening I thought to myself, "Now all that money goes away from these people. They cannot re-borrow it. It goes to the big cities away from these villages, where it is borrowed by non-African big traders and companies who have securities required by the banks". If so, and it is so, when will these parishioners of mine raise their living standard? At this point I decided

to tell the people about Credit Unions and, if they accepted the idea, to start one.

## Start

On the following day I began to sell ideas to individuals about Credit Unions. Everybody I told appreciated the idea. I contacted teachers, outstanding elders in the villages, and local traders. I did this work for about three weeks. Everyone I approached welcomed the good idea with some reservation "but . . .". I told them not to worry about "buts" as we would solve them when we came together. Many of them suggested that I call a meeting of a few selected people to discuss the idea together. So I did. I selected five influential people with the help of one of my parishioners.

## The Aims

When we met I told them the aims and benefits of the would-be Credit Union:

1. It would help the members to keep and save their money together.
2. It would prevent money going out of the location without bringing anything else in exchange.
3. Such Credit Unions, after having saved much money could provide loans on credit to the members for developing their fields, planting tea and coffee. It could help members to buy grade cattle, build good houses and lend them school fees for their children.
4. Credit Union based on principles of co-operation would bring people together and teach them how to solve their economic problems as a community.
5. Credit Union would be a lending body within the reach of every member and the cases of the members would be listened to with sympathy and understanding.
6. The aim of the credit union was not to make profit, like the commercial banks, but to raise the living standards of the members and the country as a whole.
7. The loans were to bear interest agreed upon by the members and likewise the money deposited in the

credit union by members would also bear interest for them.

8. The interest on loans would be shared by members, or if agreed upon would be ploughed back into the project.

After I explained these points, they all cheered and clapped their hands. But they woke up one after the other, pouring out their "buts".

### Difficulties

Any project, no matter how small it may be, has its own difficulties. Such difficulties may be based on the background of the people or place, the present situation, or even on the future outcome of the venture. This proposed Credit Union was no exception to this chain of difficulties.

After I had spoken to them I told them to say frankly what they thought about such a Union. One old man woke up and said, "It is a very good idea if only it succeeded. Unfortunately in the past we had such an organisation based on more or less the same pattern as the one you have in mind. They all failed because some people were wiser than others. Some people or someone, somewhere, somehow ran away with the money". He quoted so many African companies and societies which although started with the best of good intentions yet failed. I agreed with what he said, but I also gave him examples of Coffee Co-operative Societies within the locality which were successful and yet were being run by the people themselves. They argued back that they were being assisted by the Government Co-operative Department and books were supervised by the Departments' officials and so they were secure. I told them that the credit union would teach us how to run our own affairs without requiring to be supervised by anybody. But if supervision was required especially at the beginning we would be ready to invite government officials to inspect the books so that the people may have faith in the Society.

Another difficulty brought forward was that there are banks and the Agriculture Department which give loans to farmers and traders. Why start another new body altogether? I told them that banks and the government were lending

money to very few selected people. Banks were trading with the money of the people. Depositors, to borrow their own deposit money, were charged up to, say, 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. Banks would keep  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and give only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to the depositors as interest. With Credit Unions, unlike the banks, all the interest obtained through the loans would belong to the members. Moreover in the credit union people would be the *masters* of their own money.

Another difficulty was what could we do with the government as it was very critical of Societies. I told them that we should try to convince the government that it was a society for economic development and that it was not a political organisation. (At this time the Government had laid down very stiff money restrictions on Societies for fear that they would turn political.) After speaking much on the difficulties with which the project would be faced we agreed to meet after a fortnight and try to bring more people to that meeting.

### **A Big Step Forward**

Two weeks later we met. More people came. The people who had attended the first meeting were very enthusiastic about the proposed Credit Union. They were now answering the difficulties presented by the newcomers. I repeated what I had said at the first meeting to acquaint the newcomers with the proposed society. During the course of discussion one man proposed that we should ask the government to allow us to start the movement. Another man suggested that we should first draw up a Constitution which we should present to the Government for approval. The people accepted the idea and they chose a Committee of ten people, most of them teachers, with myself included, to prepare a Constitution. The Committee was asked to present the Constitution to another meeting which would take place after a month. Meanwhile the would-be members were asked to sell the idea of the proposed Society to the people.

## **First Approaches to the Government**

After a month we met and read the Constitution to the people. Some points here and there were altered but the Constitution as a whole was approved. We posted this to the Registrar of Societies. The answer came after three weeks. The Registrar told us that if we wanted to register our Society it would have to be as a Company. This was because the Credit Union as we described it did not fit the definition of a Society. But we could not afford to register it as a Company and moreover that was not our intention.

The Catholic Secretariat in Nairobi was also interested in Credit Unions. I approached the Secretary, Father Bischop, to try to speak to the Registrar. He did so, but the Registrar would not move an inch. We could go no further at that time.

## **The New Government Shows Favour.**

After Independence in 1963 I revived the idea, hoping that the African Government would be sympathetic to our movement. We approached the government again. The Catholic Secretariat in Nairobi, now under Monsignor John Njenga, helped me very much. It was he who approached the Co-operative Department. The Credit Union movement, which had already started in Tanzania, was already attracting the attention of the Kenya Co-operative Department. Mr. Jack Dublin, the representative of Credit Union National Association from the United States was organising the Credit Unions in Tanzania. He visited Kenya now and then. Since the Credit Union was a new idea in Kenya he helped to draw up a Constitution for a credit union suitable in our country. Later, the Co-operative Department issued an official Constitution based on the laws already governing Co-operative Societies.

## **Back to the People**

As soon as it came out we studied it. We called many meetings and explained the laws to the people. As these laws were aimed at protecting the well-being of credit unions they were all appreciated by the people. At this juncture the people proposed that as a sign of serious

intent everyone should pay 5 shillings each, which would be counted as their entry fee when the credit union was registered. Right there, six people paid. At another meeting the number increased to twenty. We applied for registration. The Commissioner for the Co-operative Society in Kenya sent one of his officials to investigate and report to him on our proposed credit union.

### **Recognition at Last**

He came and found sixty people waiting for him. The official spoke to them and asked them questions about the credit union. When he was satisfied that the people were sincere and serious he gave them forms to fill for registration. A Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and committee members were chosen. I was asked to be Treasurer. After the officer had left, twenty-five people paid five shillings each as a sign that they were ready to enter the credit union if registered. Meanwhile, people continued to speak about it and we had meetings now and then. After two weeks the Certificate of Registration was sent to us. The date of registration was 4th July, 1964, after three years of struggle.

With registration granted, we arranged a grand official opening so that more people might get to know about and appreciate it. In order to emphasise the importance of credit unions, we decided to invite the Minister of Commerce and Industry to come to the opening and hand over the Certificate of Registration. On 28th August, 1964, our Credit Union was duly opened by the Kenya Minister of Commerce and Industry. Very many people attended the ceremony and the Minister praised the project so much that 100 new members entered that day.

Unfortunately I did not see the continuation of this work for two days after it was opened I left Kenya for Rome for further studies. One year later I received a report which informed me that the "Mariira Parish Co-operative Credit Union," as it is called, had over 200 members with about 7,000/-, and that they had begun to give small loans to the members.

## **A Priest with Credit Unions**

During my struggle for this Credit Union, there was one question always being raised: "Should a Priest, and a Catholic Priest at that, start a Credit Union?" It was a question which was raised by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Some people saw it as a deviation from my priestly, spiritual job. One of the reasons being that many people believe that the priest's job is only to administer Sacraments and preach about the Kingdom of Heaven. We priests also tend sometimes to come to the same conclusion.

On starting a credit union I had all the backing and encouragement possible from Bishop C. Cavallera, now of Marsabit in Northern Kenya. He paid and allowed me to go to Nyegezi Social Centre in Tanzania to attend a two-week course on credit unions conducted by Jack Dublin, the special representative of C.U.N.A. in East Africa. All of which strengthened my belief that I was not deviating from the true course. It is high time that we Church leaders put Church social principles into practice, especially in developing countries.

## **The Material Ministry is also Spiritual**

We may commit the sin of social injustice not only by commission but also by omission. I may be wrong, but I strongly believe that a priest if entrusted with a parish of poor people in a developing country and who does not move an inch to show those parishioners how to use the soil in order to get a livelihood out of it cannot escape blame. It does not serve our purpose of preaching Christianity to tell the people that our work is only concerned with spiritual matters. That is true, of course, but to show people how to plant fruit and vegetables or how to organise trade in order to earn a livelihood as human beings is just as truly a spiritual duty in an indirect way as it is a spiritual duty to administer the Sacraments. A man or a woman cannot come to the Sacraments if he or she has had no food to eat nor clothes to wear. A family cannot fulfil its obligation of bringing up children without food, clothes and shelter. Their duty to the Church cannot be fulfilled without money. If my parishioners were in

such a state of poverty or ignorance that they could not get enough material sufficiency as to be able to fulfil their spiritual duties, then I would feel guilty if I did not try to show them how to help themselves, especially if I were in a place where I was the only person with knowledge and the ability to help.

Both the creation of the soil and the Bible are works of God, destined to save mankind. As a representative of God among the people I have a duty not only to interpret the Bible but also to interpret and explore the soil for it is the base from which springs their fulfilment of the Bible. Neglect of one would mean the collapse of the other. So I feel convinced that a priest showing his people how to be well-off materially is not only lending a hand but even doing his proper duty.

### **The Material Ministry may need to Precede the Spiritual**

We priests are selected by God to guide His people from a miserable world to the eternal land of promise, just as Moses was chosen by God to guide his people from the then miserable Egypt to the land of Canaa. There the people of God were suffering spiritually and materially. God did not tell Moses to go and tell the people to obey and bear troubles for God's sake, but He ordered him to remove them from the material afflictions. The order of God given to Moses was not listened to by the people of Israel on account of anguish of spirit (Genesis vi). It is still true today that poor people with anguish of spirit will hardly listen to any preaching until they are materially stable. If we want to preach Christianity which will endure with the people, let us do our best to raise the spiritual and material standards at the same time.

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## INDUSTRIAL ANGLE

Local government expenditure has been increasing annually by about 10 per cent. And in this article, Dr. Jackson examines the alternatives to the present rating situation. Can we raise the money needed by a local income tax? But then what about depressed areas? Should we raise the national income tax? Or is this too high already?

## Future of the Rates

J. M. JACKSON

FOR some years, there has been increasing dissatisfaction with the rates. Most householders complain bitterly that the rate demands they receive are increasing year by year. Recently, the Government has announced proposals for alleviating part of the burden on ratepayers. First, it is proposing to relieve part of the burden on those with low incomes, and secondly it is proposing to give greater central government grants to local authorities which will reduce the proportion of the annual increase in local government spending that has to be met from the rates. These particular proposals are, at the present moment, very much in the melting pot, for at the time of writing the date of the General Election has just been announced.

There is, therefore, no point in studying in detail the proposals the present Government has put forward. What is more useful is a general study of the problem of local government finance, against which the reader can judge for himself such proposals as are implemented by the next government, whatever party may be returned at the end of March.

### *Increase in Expenditure*

First of all, it is important that we should see something of the way in which local government expenditure is

increasing. During the period from 1953 to 1963, the current expenditure<sup>1</sup> of local authorities increased from a total of £1,044 millions to £2,580 millions. The annual increase in expenditure was of the order of 10 per cent. Over the same period, the National Income rose from £13,700 millions to £24,200 millions, a much smaller increase of roughly 6 per cent a year. Clearly then, the rate of increase in local government spending is faster than the rate of increase in national income, and faster too than the rate of increase in the total spending of central and local governments together.

We should, of course, expect regular increases in the rate demands made by our local councils. The rateable values on which rates are levied remain stable between infrequent valuations whilst costs generally are rising. In large measure, the increasing costs of local services are beyond the control of the local authorities. Teachers' salaries, for example, are negotiated nationally, and the final decision rests with the Minister of Education. If he decides that a particular salary scale is to be paid, no individual local authority has any power to challenge that decision. The increasing cost of local government, therefore, is not the result entirely of the grandiose ideas of local councillors who cannot exercise a little self-control when it comes to spending the ratepayers' money. One can always find examples of extravagance by local councils, just as by the central government, and it is important to do everything possible to stop such waste: but it is only a small part of the story.

### *Police and Education*

If we look in a little more detail at the things on which local authorities spend their money, we see that two services which account for something like 45-50 per cent of the current expenditure of local authorities, police and education are increasing in cost more rapidly than local

<sup>1</sup>i.e. such items as salaries for its employees, the cost of materials used during the year. Costs of building, for example, new schools are not included as current expenditure, though interest and amortisation charges on money borrowed to finance such buildings is included.

government services generally. This is not surprising. In both cases, wages and salaries are the major factor in costs. Teachers and policemen expect their salaries to keep in line with the increased earnings of men and women in other occupations. Elsewhere, productivity is increasing, but the scope for increasing productivity in either of these services is strictly limited. They are bound, therefore, to become increasingly costly.

We must, then, expect the cost of local government services to rise, even relatively to national income and total government spending. Some increase in rates is not unreasonable. We do not complain when we find ourselves paying more income tax each year. This happens automatically because most of us have increasing incomes and a proportion of the increase naturally goes in tax. Where, however, the tax is levied on a fixed value, as with rates, there has to be an increase in the *rate* of tax, and, perhaps illogically, we resent this more than we resent the automatically increased income tax liability.

### *Rates a Regressive Tax*

This resentment is not entirely illogical, however. Rates tend to be a regressive tax, and, for this reason, it is unfortunate that it should be necessary to raise rapidly increasing sums of money from this source. It has become generally agreed that a tax system ought to be progressive; that is, the proportion of income paid in tax should increase as income increases. After all, a man with a very low income needs the whole of it to provide himself with the bare necessities of life. Even above a certain minimum, he only ought to pay a small proportion in tax, because most of the extras he can now afford are hardly what most of us would call luxuries. Only as his income rises well above the minimum required for subsistence can he afford to pay a substantial proportion in tax. One may argue about how steep the degree of progression should be, but most people would argue for some degree of progression: certainly one cannot justify a regressive tax system, whereby the poorer members of the community pay a larger proportion of their incomes in tax.

Why are rates regressive? In general, a rich man will live in a better house than a poor one, and this house will, therefore, have a higher rateable value. The richer man will pay more in rates than the poorer one. However, a man with £800 a year may live in a house with a rateable value of £40 a year: a man with £1,600 may live in one with a rateable value of £60, so that although he has double the income of the former, he pays only 50 per cent more in rates. This kind of situation is typical, and therefore the rating system is regressive.

### *Size of Family*

Rates also tend to be regressive with family size. A man's ability to pay taxation must be matched to his responsibilities as well as his income. A man with dependent children properly receives an allowance in respect of each child, thus reducing his tax liability. In the case of rates, however, the opposite is the case. A man with a family needs a larger house than a childless couple; but a bigger house usually means a higher rateable value. Thus the man with a family is called upon to pay more in rates than one without. Alternatively, because he cannot afford to meet this extra tax burden, he does not buy or rent a house that is really adequate for his needs. We are in fact deliberately taxing one of the basic necessities of family life, housing accommodation and discouraging men with families from properly housing them.

The system of financing local government by rates would not be wrong merely because it was regressive. It is legitimate to employ some regressive taxes provided the overall tax system is progressive. What is happening at the moment is that the yield required from one important regressive tax is increasing disproportionately to the total yield of taxation. This regressive element is becoming increasingly important, and is reducing the overall degree of progression. Moreover, for some householders with very low incomes, the burden can be very severe. The time has come, therefore, to undertake a very careful review of the existing system and the alternatives. The kind of approach already suggested by the government is no real answer. It

is only trying to alleviate the worst evils of a system that is fundamentally unsound.

### *The Alternatives*

What are the alternatives to the present rating system? There are a good many different schemes that might be devised, but basically they fall into two categories. The first is to find some other means of raising money locally, and the second is to shift part of the burden from local government to the central government. Already, however, the central government is providing about 40 per cent of the current revenues of local authorities. This is equal to the sum raised by the rates, the remaining 20 per cent of income being derived from trading profits, rents and so on. Is it possible to increase the proportion of central government grants to total local authority revenue without undermining the independence of local government?

It would seem fairly certain that if more of the money spent by local authorities were to be provided by the central government these authorities would become little more than agents of the central government. It is, of course, arguable that this is already the case. In such fields as education, the local authorities have only limited independence. They are being subjected to increasing central government pressure to move towards the introduction of some kind of comprehensive education. They are bound by national salary scales, and so on. In the circumstances, it might well be argued that the cost of education should be met directly by the central government. In addition, the government might give a grant of, say, 40 per cent towards the cost of other services. Given the present incomes from rents and other sources, this would cut by about half the amount that had to be raised from the rates.

Unless one can cut local government spending, however, the money still has to be raised somehow. If we choose to pay less as ratepayers directly to our local council, we will have to pay more in income tax or indirect taxes to the central government. If indirect taxes are increased, these too are usually regressive. Although people with bigger incomes tend to smoke and drink more than those with

smaller, their consumption of these commodities does not increase proportionately to their incomes. Therefore they pay proportionately less in tax than poorer people. This is exactly what is wrong with the rates. Since this is likely to be true of any indirect tax that is capable of raising substantial sums, the only possible reform would appear to be to raise by income tax the money needed to offset the reduction in the rates. There are two ways of doing this. One could simply raise the present income tax, or one could introduce a separate local income tax.

We need, therefore, to consider possible arguments against raising income tax, and then to consider the special arguments for and against a local income tax.

### *Objections to Income Tax*

Many people will object to raising income tax, whether it is by raising the existing rates for the national tax or by the introduction of a separate local tax on incomes. It is feared by many that the present level of taxation of incomes is already a disincentive to effort, and that this would be made worse if income tax were increased.

We must be very careful when dealing with arguments of this kind. The present standard rate of income tax is 8s. 3d. in the pound. In practice, however, two-ninths of earned income is allowed as a deduction against taxable income. Taking the earned income relief into account, therefore, the standard rate of tax is effectively only 6s. 5d. in the pound. In other words, for every pound a man earns, he keeps 13s. 7d. Is this rate of tax a discouragement to effort? Does it deter men from working an extra hour or two? Surely all the evidence is that a large number of men are only too anxious to work overtime in order to supplement the earnings they would get during a normal week. Above a certain level of income, of course, surtax is also payable, and the combined surtax and income tax together can take a very large slice out of any additional earnings. *But surtax does not come into operation at all if a man is only in receipt of earned income until his income rises above £5,000 a year.*

On the whole, I am inclined to think that at present

income tax is not at a sufficiently high level to be a serious disincentive. This does not mean, of course, that, if the rates of tax were raised still further, there would still be no disincentive effect. It is difficult to know, without access to the detailed data of the Inland Revenue, just what rates of tax would be needed to enable the present rates to be cut by half. Some rough estimates I have attempted suggest that it might mean as much as 9d. on the present reduced rates of tax and 1s. 6d. on the standard rate—perhaps even as much as 1s. and 2s. respectively on these rates. It is, I think, still unlikely that these rates would be a serious disincentive to effort. Although a man already working his normal week of 40 or 42 hours would now get a smaller net reward for each extra hour he worked, his earnings from the normal week would be reduced. The evidence is that today people value material goods highly, and it is therefore quite likely that in this kind of situation they would be induced to work even harder in order to be able to go on buying all the things they want.

### *A Local Tax*

The strong argument for a local income tax is that unless the local authority has control over its own sources of revenue, it cannot be truly independent. There is much truth in this argument. There are also dangers. Would it be desirable to limit the amount of a local income tax? It might otherwise seem all too easy for the city fathers to decide to put another 3d. on the income tax in order to finance some grandiose scheme. Again, it would be necessary for the central authority to decide what degree of progression if any should be adopted.

A local income tax would not overcome one of the serious difficulties of the present rating system. Some relatively depressed areas have low rateable values, yet they may still have heavy expenditures. These will also be areas where the average income is low. Just as high rate poundages are now needed in these areas, so a relatively high rate of local income tax would be needed. This difficulty would, on the other hand be overcome, if impor-

tant and costly services (especially education) were to become a responsibility of national government.

### *Who Needs Help?*

In much of the discussion of rating, emphasis has been placed on the needs of people with comparatively low incomes. I think we should beware of accepting this too readily. I think that the present system can bear very heavily on families with children, at most levels of income. It is especially serious for families with children on moderate incomes as well as very low incomes. I believe that in the autumn of 1962, a married man with three children earning a wage of £12 a week was no better off than a childless couple with just under £8 a week. The standard of living of such a family would be only marginally higher than that allowed by the National Assistance scales, and indeed no higher than that of some people on National Assistance when certain earnings or income may be disregarded.<sup>2</sup> In making any reforms in our tax system, we should bear this in mind. It may well be that at all levels we should consider further assistance to families with children—possibly in tax reliefs at the higher levels and increased cash allowances at the lower levels.

<sup>2</sup>The argument concerning relative living standards has been developed by me in an article "Poverty, National Assistance and the Family" to appear shortly in the **Scottish Journal of Political Economy**.

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## *Community of Love*

"Laws are needed in every society, but the great law of the Gospel is the law of charity. The Church certainly is a juridical society, but she is also and above all a community of love."—Mgr. Guerry, Archbishop of Cambrai.

# The Padres of San Miguelito

## VII: STUDY AND ADAPTATION

MICHAEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON, S.J.

UNDER these two headings, the Fathers of San Miguelito devote their 9th Report to a searching examination of the aims they are pursuing in their work and of some of the means they are employing to achieve them. They stress the importance of having a clear idea both of the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of their people: in other words, of the already-existing base of faith on which they have to build and of the finished building which is the goal of their endeavour. These more theoretical considerations have to be then embodied in the relevant pastoral devices that will bring them to the people, an operation that calls for skilful adaptation. The Padres consider three areas in which they have attempted this adaptation: in the liturgy, in instruction courses and in the *Cursillos de Cristianidad*. These latter, together with the adaptations made by the Fathers, are described at some length. What they have written is reproduced here in full both because the *Cursillo* Movement is having an increasingly strong impact on Latin-American Catholicism and because it still remains relatively unknown in the English-speaking world.

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REPORT IX — August, 26th, 1964

Your Eminence:

In March of 1963, you, in co-operation with the Archbishop of Panama, launched an experimental parish in the area of San Miguelito. Until the very moment of writing, this work has been both fascinating and difficult: *fascinating*, because we are not held to traditional methods; *difficult*,

because each effort involves serious study and relevant adaptation.

## I: STUDY

Father Juan Luis Segundo S.J., the famous theologian from Uruguay, has produced a valuable theory on Latin American Catholicism. He states that the Revelation of the Word of God is an unfolding process, not only in the sense of being given by God gradually, but even more importantly in the sense of being understood and assimilated ever so slowly and gradually by the people of God from the time of Abraham to our own. Father Segundo further states that the people in Latin America, depending on place, education, class, etc., are in various stages of assimilation of the Word of God. Each people, each area must be studied carefully because it hardly makes sense to attempt to advance a people without knowing the *terminus a quo*.

### *“Pre-Christian” faith*

We do not pretend to have done an exhaustive and definitive study of our people, but we believe that we now have an accurate notion of the “Word” position, the “*terminus a quo*” of our people. Father Segunda states that there are many people in Latin America who are still in the stage of pre-Christian revelation. In some respects, this is true of our people. To mention two examples: 1. their devotion to the Saints is perilously close to polytheism, definitely a pre-Christian stage of revelation; 2, their understanding of and morbid preoccupation with death, surely a pre-Christian stage of assimilation of revelation. All one has to do is attend a 9-day wake here (the *novenario*) to be brought back on the wings of time to the pre-Christian era.

The collective understanding of our people of the Word of God is, by no means, however, uniformly pre-Christian. They have a definite sense of being the People of God, saved by Christ from sin and united to the Father. Yet even within this framework of Revelation in Christ, there are elements of a retarded assimilation. To cite two examples:

1. they definitely have the confused notion that the flesh is evil and that the marriage act is somehow impure love—a notion that has consistently cropped up even within the Christian era and produced the Manichean and Albigensian heresies; 2. although they have a sense of being the people of God, still they have failed to distinguish between being the ferment of the mass and being the mass itself—a conception which hearkens back to earlier Christian times, one which produced the conflict between the Papacy and the Roman Emperor. What Father Segundo calls the gradual assimilation of the Revealed Word, other theologians call the Evolution of Dogma. In various parts of the Catholic world, the concept of the Church as leaven is well evolved and is now finding definitive expression in the Second Vatican Council; that evolution or assimilation, however, is considerably retarded among our people and their clergy.

### *Biblical Christianity*

If it is important to know the *terminus a quo* or our people, it is equally important to be aware of the *terminus ad quem*, the true direction of the Christian dynamic. For this, we must be truly "Biblical" Christians. The Bible, precisely the New Testament, is not so important because it contains the sayings and acts of the Redeemer, but rather because it contains a description of the early Christian community, its faith, its structure and its direction. Christ founded His Church on His Apostles and, thus, the original Apostolic community must for ever be the model and the foundation of Christian communities in other times and places.

Father David Efroymson of Joliet, Illinois, has a very apt illustration of this truth. He compares the Church to a skyscraper. Every age and place must add another storey on the "house" of God: something new, different, more modern, but each new storey must be in line with the foundation. That foundation is the Apostolic Church. It would not do to imitate slavishly the primitive church for this would be building foundation on foundation. On the other hand, each new age must produce a new Church, but one that is in line with the original foundation. A new storey

that is out of line produces something ugly or, worse, a disaster. When one analyzes the Catholicism of our people and then seriously studies the Gospels, the Acts and the Letters, one sees immediately that the current Panamanian Catholic structure and faith is seriously out of line, a disproportion which, if not corrected and adjusted, could easily produce a major disaster. The primitive Apostolic Community was built on Christ himself as keystone—the principal lines of construction were conversion, paschal mystery, community and communion and Parousia. These then must be the main guide lines for us as we attempt to build a Christian community here. It is in the light of this task, that we present some of the work we have been attempting in the past few months.

## II: ADAPTATION

### **A: LITURGY**

The primitive liturgy was surely not a "spectator sport", but rather a community act in which all participated. We have done everything in our power to give the liturgy back to the "spectators" to perform. The lay adults do everything: sing, respond, read the lessons, make the announcements, compose the litanies, bring up the offertory gifts in procession. While the president of the community, the celebrant, reads and performs in their name, the Eucharistic Act of Thanksgiving, the Canon. The people have truly taken to this type of liturgy as is evidenced by the fact that all our Masses are brimming with people and we now have a serious shortage of space. We do not wish to exaggerate, however, this success because we have not as yet arrived at 10 per cent (3,000 people) assisting at Mass every Sunday.

We have recently changed the manner of giving sermons from straight homilies or discourses to public discussions of the biblical texts. The celebrant asks the leading questions and attempts to guide the congregation to a clear understanding and more profound conviction of the Word of God. Last Sunday's Gospel will serve as a case in point: "No man can serve two masters . . . either he must serve God or riches, but not both . . . Do not be worried as to

how you shall eat, as to how you shall clothe yourselves, as to how to house yourselves . . . instead seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice and all these things shall be given you in addition". Predictably enough, some members of the congregation thought that we shouldn't be worried about getting food, work or money to pay the mortgage on the house, but rather we should trust in God for all these things. Others objected strenuously that, particularly in these hard times of depression in Panama, we have to worry and be concerned with these necessities and that we have to struggle mightily for them. The people themselves found the solution of this dilemma in the last words of the gospel text: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice . . .". Surely we must worry about the necessities of life and struggle for them, but what is most important is our manner of preoccupation and struggle. If we all go our separate, egotistical ways, then we shall never solve our problems. If on the other hand, we seek and work for the Kingdom of God, if we aim to live as brothers, as a real family here on earth, if we all concern ourselves with the problems of all, then we have a chance to bring real charity and justice to our community and to all of Panama, then, of course, the specific problems of hunger, unemployment, and poverty will have been solved because we will have achieved the "Kingdom of God".

This type of sermon seems to be very satisfying to the people because they get a chance to express themselves, and it is also satisfying to us priests because we immediately become aware of what the people do not understand, how they think and how they react when they truly do understand.

#### **B: INSTRUCTION COURSES**

The main prop of our Apostolate continues to be the discussion classes held in many parts of the parish with groups of couples ranging in size from 8 to 15 couples. We have many of these courses running and, now that the first fully-formed laymen are beginning to emerge, we are able to begin many more groups. The effect of these groups is not only instruction in the doctrine and prayer of the

Church (a para-liturgical service always ends the discussion), but more importantly the little community of "eclesiola" that begins to form in each area as the couples begin to know and respect one another and share their faith and charity. This little Christian community is a beautiful thing to watch as it begins to form and develop. Whereas, at first, we had some difficulty in gathering couples for these groups, our present problem is quite the contrary. Couples are anxious to attend and feel offended when they are not invited. Why? Simply because the Sign of Christ, the true Christian community, is beginning to appear, with its friendliness and joy and fervour. Once it appears, others wish to get in on it. Until, however, we can produce more trained laymen, our work must necessarily be somewhat limited.

Something interesting has happened in regard to these groups. The couples themselves, anxious to maintain and deepen the joy of being together, have, in several instances, begun on their own the custom of Sunday dinner together. Each week the couples go to the home of one of the members where they eat a common meal and usually end up discussing the gospel of the day or some point in their course. Neighbours begin to notice the camaraderie and ask to be invited . . . the greatest apologetic of the Church is the Church itself!

### C: CURSILLOS DE CRISTIANIDAD

To follow up the extensive course (4 months) of instruction, we felt we needed something that would deepen the experience of living in community (of being the Church) and at the same time something that would enable the people to make a very firm personal decision to lead Christian lives. The *Cursillos de Cristianidad* seemed to be admirably suited for this purpose, and so we began to send some of our men and women to make *cursillos* in the diocesan movement. Along the way, we discovered that for our people, it also needed adaptation.

The *Cursillos de Cristianidad* were begun in Spain and in a few years have spread all over our Continent: they have done much to contribute to the renovation of our present-

day Catholicism. It is what its name indicates: a short intensive course in Christianity. The exercise begins on a Thursday evening in silence with a night of recollection, the notion being that confessions should be heard at this time, so that the participants would be spiritually and emotionally free of all obstacles in order to devote three whole days to a study of Christianity. These three days are packed full of doctrine. The last day is to be a day of decision at the end of which the *cursillista* gives public testimony to his decision and goes forth to live the "fourth day"—the rest of his life in the active apostolate.

There is no doubt that the *Cursillo de Cristianidad*, properly understood and executed, has proved to be a superb instrument of renovation, but neither is there any doubt in our minds that the method needed considerable adaptation to be effective among our people. The following are some of the aspects that concerned us and precipitated the changes:

(1) The *Cursillo* is so packed with meditations and conferences (some of them very long) that there is virtually no time at all for assimilation, thought or free discussion.

(2) The *Cursillo* was designed for a select few who would be apostolic leaders; we wanted something that we could give to all the adults as they finish their courses—a real experience in living Christianity.

(3) Our men work on Saturday as well as Friday and receive very low salaries. Giving up two day's pay is a tremendous hardship for them and their families.

(4) The *Cursillo de Cristianidad*, at least here in Panama, is not parish-orientated. All the *Cursillistas* are expected to attend a city-wide weekly meeting which effectively takes them out of their parish orbit.

(5) Lastly the most important reason of all: the *Cursillos de Cristianidad*, we feel, are designed for people like our own brothers and sisters back home, people who are not almost completely ignorant of their religion, who are not almost completely estranged from the Church, but rather people who, perhaps, are away from the Sacraments but who could be easily reconciled, people whose somewhat dormant faith could be easily re-activated.

Perhaps half of our people made their first confession and Communion when they were children and, because of faulty instruction and care, have not frequented the Sacraments since. Only 15 per cent of our couples are married by the Church. Because of a seriously corrupted environment, many of our best people have what amounts to grave moral problems. To put them on a *Cursillo de Cristianidad* with its highly charged "Prodigal Son" talk the very first night forces them, as it were, to make a precipitate decision the very first night, impels them to confess when they are not really prepared to do so. We found many using the Sacrament of Penance, according to what they had been taught years before, as a purge of sin, but not as a reconversion and reconciliation. Many had no adequate notion of sin, particularly in the area of sex and marriage, and yet they were confessing anyway. Later on in the *Cursillo* when they learned what sin and the spirit of the world really were and what the Sacrament of Penance truly meant, they found themselves in the position of wanting to confess again. Thus neither the people and surely not the priest-confessors were satisfied with the arrangement.

For all these reasons mentioned, we have adapted the *Cursillo* to the needs of our people in the following manner:

- (1) The *Cursillos* will be held for parishioners: we hope to have 50 people make a *Cursillo* every month.
- (2) The *Cursillo* will begin on Friday evening and end on Sunday evening, thus requiring but one day off for the men.
- (3) A group discussion of at least one hour's length will follow each conference.
- (4) Confessions will be heard not on Friday night but rather on Saturday after a solid doctrinal preparation.
- (5) The new form of *Cursillo*, which we call the *Cursillo de Iniciación*, combines features of the Ignatian Exercises, the *Cursillo de Cristianidad* and the Better World Retreats—all, we hope, adapted well to our people.

We now have approximately 200 *Cursillistas* in the parish—in fact, we can say honestly they *are* the parish. We hope to have at least one every month and thus, God willing,

through the courses and the *Cursillo*, help form 600 truly Christian families each year. Of the 64 men who made the *Cursillo* two weeks ago, half were not married by the Church. All of them now wish to revalidate their marriages and will do so in two weeks hence when their wives will have returned from their *Cursillo*. We are pleased and excited by the possibilities of this form of preaching the Word of God and evoking Christian Community.

## SCHEDULE OF THE CURSILLO DE INICIACION

### *Friday Evening*

8:00 Preliminary Conference (by laymen): an explanation of the proper frame of mind for the *Cursillo*.  
8:30 *El Ideal* (by layman): an exposition of the necessity of a great ideal in order to become great men. Followed by Discussion.  
10:00 *Las Tres Miradas* (by layman): a meditation on the call and challenge by Christ to three men: the rich young man, Judas, and Peter. Silence begins with this meditation.

### *Saturday*

6:30 a.m. Morning Prayers in the form of Para-Liturgy. Silence broken with the singing of "De Colotes".  
7:00 a.m. Breakfast.  
7:30 a.m. *El Ideal Cristiano* (by a priest): exposition of the great Christian cause, the Church itself. Discussion in groups follows.  
9:00 a.m. *La Gracia* (by a priest): explanation of the dynamic force of the Church, the family life of God, and how it is acquired through Baptism. Discussion.  
10:30 a.m. *El Espiritu de Cristo* (by a layman): exposition of the nature of Christian love, particularly as exemplified in Matrimony. Discussion.  
12:00 a.m. Dinner.  
1:00 p.m. *El Espiritu del mundo* (by a layman): exposition of the nature and dynamics of sin. Discussion.  
3:00 p.m. *El Hijo Prodigio* (by a layman): reading of the

gospel text and commentary on the first part of the parable: the estrangement of the younger son. Examination of conscience and meditation in silence.

4:00 p.m. *El Hijo Prodigio* (by same layman): commentary on the second part of the parable: the mercy of God and reconciliation. Explanation of the Sacrament of Penance. Silence follows —opportunity to confess or consult with one of the priests.

6:00 p.m. Supper. Silence is lifted.

7:00 p.m. *La Piedad* (by laymen): a semi-comical drama of some false attitudes of Christian piety, together with a description of true manly piety.

8:00 p.m. *Songfest*: all the men gather to sing and play their instruments, celebrating the return of the Prodigal.

### *Sunday*

6:30 a.m. *Cristo El Hombre* (by a priest): meditation on the humanity of Christ with particular emphasis on his masculinity and his "revolutionary" cause.

7:00 a.m. Breakfast.

8:00 a.m. *La Eucaristía* (by a priest): explanation of the Mass as the great community meal of those united in Christ. Discussion.

10:00 a.m. *Seglares en la Iglesia* (by a layman): exposition priesthood of Christ and how it finds expression in the clergy and in the laity. Discussion.

12:00 a.m. Dinner.

1:00 p.m. *Acción* (by a layman): explanation of the principles of and necessity for action by the layman both within the Christian community, the parish, and without, in the world. Discussion.

2:30 p.m. *Estudio* (by a layman): an exposition of how to learn more and why one must do so, by knowing Christ today (in the community), Christ in the primitive Church (in the Bible),

by knowing the world, the field of action.  
Discussion.

4:00 p.m. *Cursillista más allá* (by a layman): resumé of the principal points of the *Cursillo* and a projection of the common work of the future.

5:00 p.m. Buses leave for the parish.

6:00 p.m. *Community Mass* in the parish centre in the presence of their families and of all the former *cursillistas* and their families. Individual testimony to the Holy Spirit by the *cursillistas* at sermon time. The Kiss of Peace and Communion as the final act of commitment that closes the *Cursillo*.

7:30 p.m. *La Gran Fiesta*: an act of Christian joy—dancing, singing and deepening friendships.

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## *Source of Dignity*

"For the Church's social doctrine . . . the dignity of work comes from the dignity of the human person of the workers. It is a *human* act. Father Villain says 'We are here at the antipodes of pure socialist thought; for if man has dignity because he works his dignity is in his work and still more in the final product. We, on the contrary, say that it is man who gives work its dignity and that the source of the dignity of human work is in man.' " Work must not be equated to merchandise, nor must it be considered solely as a productive force at the service of the State. From *The Social Teaching of the Church*.—Mgr. Guerry.

# Book Reviews

## AFRICA AND DEMOCRACY

**Crisis in Rhodesia** by Nathan Shamuyarira; Andre Deutsch, 30s. **Politics in West Africa** by W. Arthur Lewis; Allen & Unwin, 15s. **The Soviet Bloc, China and Africa** edited by S. Hamrell and C. G. Widstrand; Pall Mall, 14s. **Breaking the Silence** by W. J. Weatherby; Penguin Original, 5s. **Flamingo Feather** by Laurens van der Post; Penguin, 5s.

IT might not be too much of an exaggeration to define Africa's present travail in terms of the dishonesty which attends most discussion of its problems.

The most recent example comes to mind. Many were taken by surprise at the army revolt which swept Nigeria's Government out of power last January and set up military rule in its place. They would not have been had they known the facts—of fraudulent elections the previous October in the country's Western Region, which cost between 300 and 500 lives and left the area in a state of anarchy. The facts were concealed from a world still kidding itself that Nigeria represented Africa's best hope of democracy. In fact, the last democratic props had been swept from under that vast country's apparatus of government ever since the politicians of the East broke their coalition with the Muslim North and forced it to seek power through coalition with a rump of Western Region politicians, who owed their election to the infliction of fraud and intimidation on the very people they claimed to represent. The master mind behind all this was the Muslim Prime Minister of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadou Bello, who ruled the whole country through that good man who was, nevertheless, essentially his puppet, the late Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa. The democratic trappings of government were retained in Nigeria. Its real instruments were intimidation, corruption and fraud, used to preserve Northern Muslim ascendancy over the whole country.

Under the circumstances, explosion was inevitable. It came bloodily last January. The T.V. commentator at the time, who described Nigeria as Africa's last democratic hope, hardly knew what he was talking about. The hope had been finished long since.

Did it ever really exist? It all depends what you mean by democracy. I have described it elsewhere as signifying, on the one hand, an apparatus for sending the adult population to the polls: on the other, respect for certain values, like tolerance and magnanimity, which are associated, not always correctly, with its western manifestation. Liberal progressives in this country and the United States have persistently made the mistake of assuming that the installation of the democratic apparatus in any developing country would result automatically in the implanting of those values which alone can make democracy work. This is, of course, nonsense. The African call for majority rule has never been made out of love for the democratic virtues as such. Proof of this can be found in the methods employed by so many African leaders to secure their pre-independence majorities and in their rapid suppression of opposition parties after independence had been gained. For the African, majority rule was never the principle it is so often made out to be by western politicians and commentators. It was essentially a device for getting rid of the British. Western liberals who imagined it to be anything else have only their naivete to thank for the pained surprise that came to them when, after independence, one-party States were established in most African countries.

Does this mean that Africans are incapable of democracy, as so many western liberals—with their hypocritical guarded praise for the one-party State in independent Africa — insultingly appear now to believe? Once again, it all depends on what you mean by democracy. In this context, the penetrating study of Professor W. Arthur Lewis is invaluable. "The word 'democracy'", he writes, "has two meanings. Its primary meaning is that all who are affected by a decision should have the chance to participate in making that decision, either directly or through chosen

representatives. Its secondary meaning is that the will of the majority shall prevail". He goes on to show how contemporary independent Africa is capable of democratic government in the first sense, which is basic and, as a matter of fact, by no means unrelated to the traditions of African tribal life. It is not, however, suited to democracy in the second, very superficial sense and it is by no means to its discredit that this should be the case. Cleavage goes too deep in most modern African States to allow for government by majority rule. The tragedy, at present, is that so many African governments, after independence, should have sought refuge from the instability of majority-party rule in the at least equally unstable one-party State. The basic answer for Africa and, indeed, countries in some other continents as well is consensus expressing itself in coalition government on a basis of proportional representation, or in arrangements similar to that form of basic democracy which President Ayub Khan and his advisers are trying gradually to work out for Pakistan. What we must hope for is that, with patience and determination, Africa's independent countries will arrive at their own version of this general type of solution. Meanwhile, western progressives would do well to maintain silence with regard to Africa's political arrangements. They have nothing to offer that continent; nothing at all. The same applies to the old-time diehards, who see the present discomfiture of independent Africa as proof that Britain should never have gone in the first place. The trouble is not that she went. It is, rather, that she went, having done so little to prepare her colonial peoples for independent responsible government. She made the tragic mistake of confusing this with majority rule on a basis of universal suffrage. Her fault was not deliberate. She gave them no more because this was all she understood. They were given the party system and a makeshift parliament; then left to themselves.

Neither has Britain yet learnt her lesson. Her attitude in the present Rhodesia crisis bears witness to this. Government and Opposition alike still prattle on about "the principle of majority rule". There is no such principle. What

majority rule would mean after independence in Rhodesia is, in all probability, what it has turned out to mean in the rest of independent Africa; the use of the majority to crush the (in this case white) minority. The Europeans know this. It is for this reason that they are in revolt. What they fear is not representative government, but representative government on a basis of majority rule. This, they know, is a contradiction in terms: majority rule in contemporary Africa cannot be representative. The present tragedy might never have come to Rhodesia had its better informed inhabitants of both races, to say nothing of successive British Governments, understood democracy in its basic sense of representative participation by all in decisions which affect themselves. Instead, democracy in Rhodesia, as elsewhere, has been identified with the triumph of black majority rule, which white Rhodesians know will mean their reduction to second-class citizenship and rapid despoliation at the hands of a black majority. The effect has been to harden them against African advancement, not necessarily because they regard it as wrong in itself, but because they see it as preparing the way for their annihilation by an African majority. Once again, it is the determination of the British Government to force majority rule on Rhodesia that has killed the prospect of true democracy in that country. This does not make right the preservation of the status quo in Rhodesia. These words are written in an endeavour to explain the present tragedy which confronts that country. In an otherwise reasonably readable book, Nathan Shamuyarira shows no awareness of these issues. Yet, as a member of ZANU, he must know in his heart, if Joshua Nkomo and his followers come to power, his own prospect, to say nothing of that of the white community, will be exceedingly slim.

In the Penguin reprint of *Flamingo Feather* Laurens van der Post writes lovingly of an Africa that has gone. The superficial will call him a paternalist. Those who look deeper will recognise in his book a feeling for democracy in its basic sense in the relationships between black and white he portrays so sensitively and the endorsement of

hierarchy as a social stabilizer which is endemic in all his writing. Van der Post's complaint, as I see it, is that the English administration ceased to know the African. Particularly after the second world war, the African scene was cluttered with little men, made prisoner by theories, without any true understanding of people: they never took root in the countries they professed to serve. No bond existed between themselves and the inhabitants. They were the smug, impersonal heralds of a mechanical democratic process, which van der Post knew was going to tear apart not merely the old Africa, but the new one as well. He and his friends know that Africa must advance and want it to. His query is how it can do so if wrenched without thought from the context of its past. The rootlessness which will oppress its people under such circumstances may not be too far removed from that which has made a victim of the city-bound American negro. The present generation that has discarded Uncle Tom's cabin is still lonely at heart; which is no reason, of course, for continuing to live like Uncle Tom, only for shaping change to suit a life inspired by his essential goodness. In *Breaking the Silence* W. J. Weatherby writes touchingly of the built-in loneliness lying at the heart of a negro girl's life in New Orleans. One hopes and prays that tomorrow's Africa, through the haste of its independent beginnings, will not have to start the kind of weary search for its soul, which America's negro people are now engaged in.

Meanwhile, there are those prepared to prey on Africa's present misfortunes, on the enormously hard prospect that confronts her as she pushes into a new age. *The Soviet Bloc, China and Africa* examines this aspect of Africa's affairs from too academic a standpoint. Some rather indifferent writing is redeemed by first-class essays from Colin Legum and Richard Lowenthal.

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